

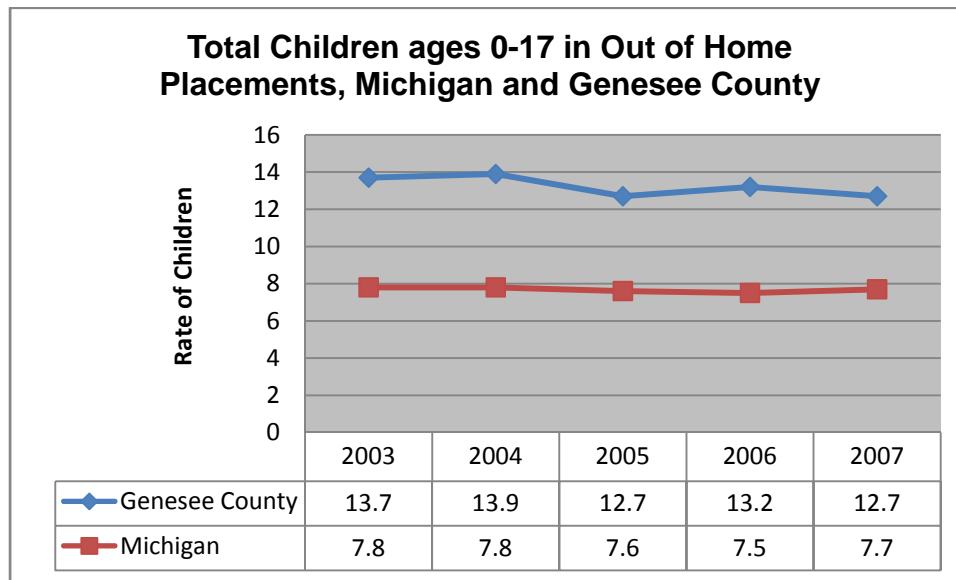


Mission: To improve the quality of life for children and families in Genesee County through assessment, awareness, advocacy and action.

Fact Sheet 5.3 Out-of-home Placements

Some youth who are wards of the court or wards of the state are placed outside their homes by either the Circuit Court Family Division or by the Department of Human Services (formerly the Family Independence Agency).

Genesee County places fewer children and spends less money on their placement than is usual in most Michigan counties.



There are a variety of types of placements that may be used. Although they also differ in cost, the most important differences are in terms of the degree of structure that they provide. ‘Structure’ is a commonly used term in the child caring community that refers to a purposefully designed and implemented system of positive and negative reinforcers that is intended to improve the social behavior of the residents over time. More highly structured the systems exhibit more detailed the reinforcement systems, a greater of adult supervision—and a higher daily cost. Structured placement environments are designed to provide a 24 hour environment to shape residents’ social behavior. This inevitably means that residential placements differ in significant respects from more natural living environments.

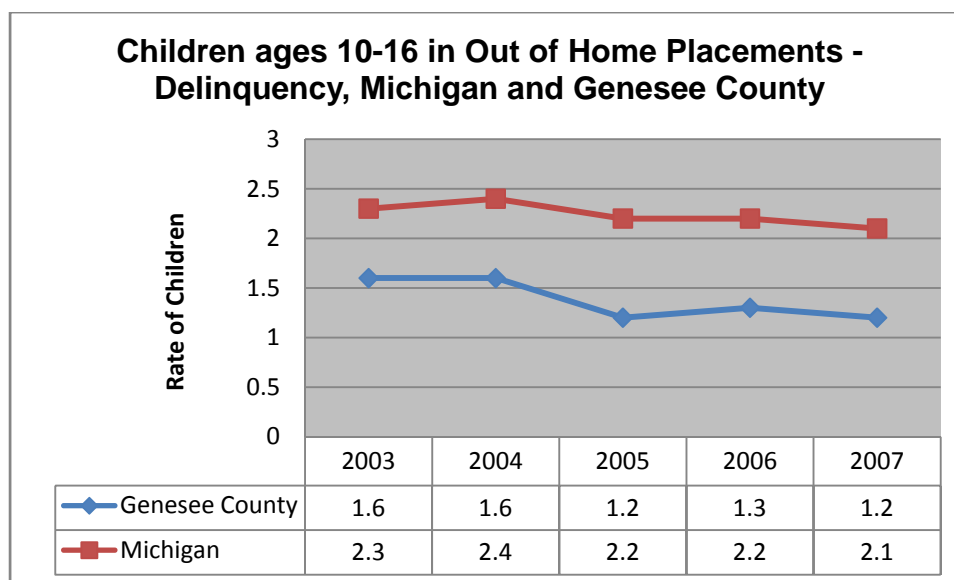
The following describes the degree of structure in these environments (from least to greatest structure): Detention centers, campus-based residential placements, group home residential placements and family foster care.

The decision regarding into which setting a child should be placed is complex. The major determinants are the behavior and need of the particular child and the ability of the family to provide what the child is believed to need. Without a doubt another factor is the availability of the various alternative care settings. While some regions of the state have detention centers located nearby, others do not. Private residential placements also developed in several regions of the state—most particularly in southeastern and western Michigan.

Fact Sheet 5.3: Out of home placements

Family foster care is the most common (and cheapest) type of out of home placement in Michigan. These are placements licensed by the state in family homes. Sometimes the placement is with a relative, but in most cases the foster parents are not related to the foster children. Placement may be short-term, but most placements are for months or years. Children in foster care attend local schools.

Detention Centers are scattered throughout the state. These are generally short-term secure facilities that provide a high degree of oversight and restriction on residents' activities. Residents are provided with medical care, educational services, and may undergo various assessments while being detained. Although standards for placement in a detention center vary from court to court, they are generally used for the housing of children who are suspected of committing serious crimes, may be dangerous to others, have violated the terms of their probation, or are considered a flight risk. The detention center in Genesee County was originally locally operated, but was afterwards operated for many years by FIA. It returned to county control within the past two years.

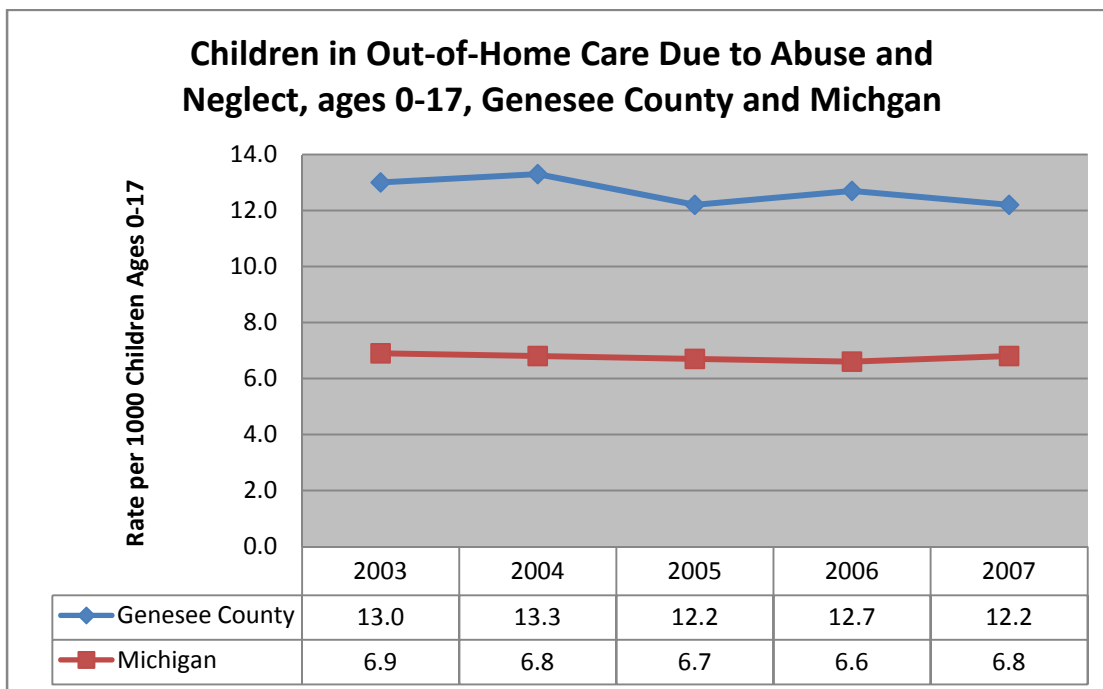


Most residential placements in Michigan are operated by private non-profit organizations, although the children in them are placed through DHS and the Family Courts. As the name implies, children live in these facilities and are provided with complete residential services.

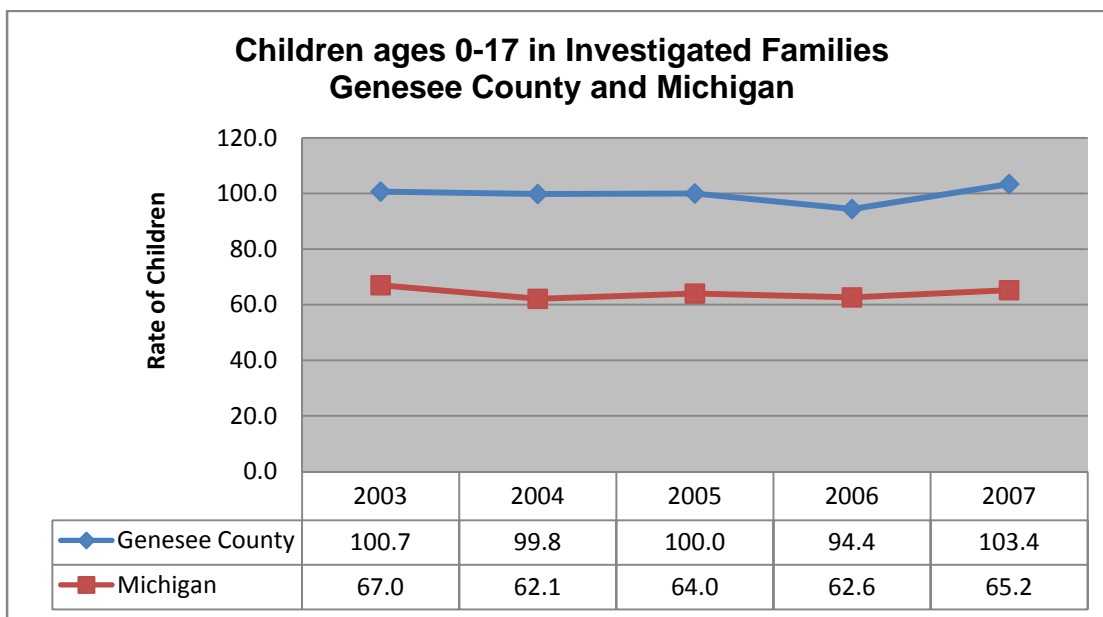
Independent living services are designed to help state wards who are either 18 or are about to be 18 acquire the necessary skills to live on their own.

In-home services are professional services that take place within the ward's natural family living environment. They seek to promote the ward's adjustment through connecting the family to necessary social and other services, and by changing the family's patterns of interaction and support to promote family members' abilities to meet each other's legitimate social, economic and psychological needs.

Fact Sheet 5.3: Out of home placements

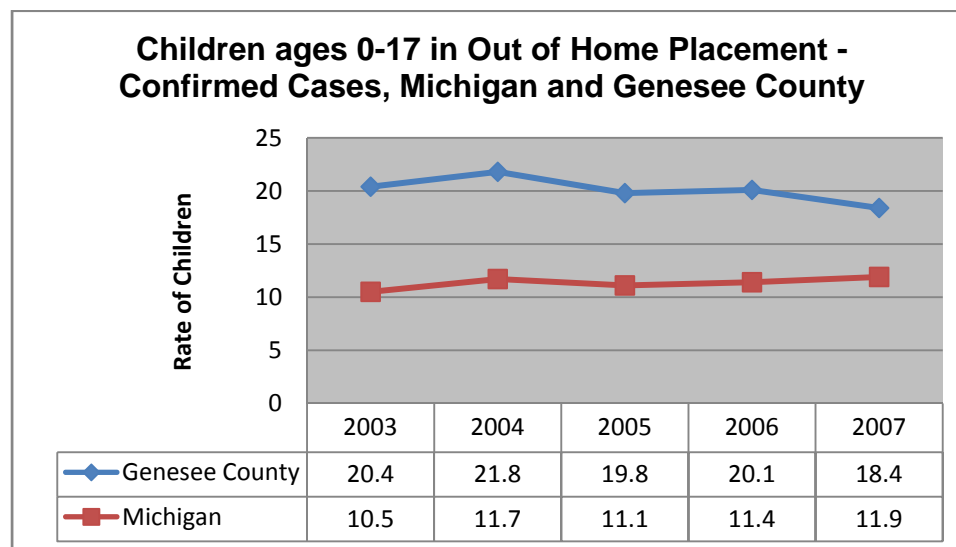


- The rate of children in out of home placements due to abuse and neglect in Genesee County has decreased slightly over the past five years.
- The rate of children in out of home placement in Michigan has remained steady.



- The rate of Children in investigated families in both Genesee County and Michigan has remained steady over the past five years. However, there was a slight drop in Genesee County in 2006.

Fact Sheet 5.3: Out of home placements



BEYOND THE NUMBERS

This is an area where the responses to the situation can be very affected by how decision-makers choose to shape the system. This calls for research and documentation about what kinds of placements work best for what kinds of children. Economic factors are but one consideration as we learn how to best serve children in need. We must be certain that the placements made are those that best serve children. There is an increasing body of evidence that speaks to what type of intervention works or does not work for particular risk factors in youth. In Genesee County, there continues to be an emphasis on utilizing interventions geared towards keeping youth in the community when feasible.

EXAMPLES OF INTERVENTIONS

Out of home placements are an intervention action that seeks to remedy a problem. The various kinds of placements, and the reasons for them, give credence to the consideration given to needs of individual children. This is not an area where we necessarily seek more or new kinds of interventions. What we need to learn are what kinds of placements best meet the needs of children, and ensure that those appropriate placements are available and utilized.

Wraparound, family reunifications, intensive probation are a few examples of some of the efforts to keep youth in their community while receiving help. A new joint program between Circuit Court Family Division and Genesee County Community Mental Health will provide a particular in-home model, Multi Systemic Therapy.

Data Source: Annie E. Casey - http://www.kidscount.org/cgi-bin/cliks.cgi?action=profile_results&subset=MI&areaid=95#5

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